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Perspective

The decision-maker requires a clear picture of the operational environment, which in the case of the military is the battle-space. The Air Force incorporates environmental information directly into command and control systems while maintaining the forecaster in the loop where it makes sense to do so. The forecaster's role is to add value to products and to communicate with the user, answering questions, articulating uncertainty, and refining weather support needs. The Air Force develops four-dimensional (4-D) data bases that are focused on operational effects, not "weather for weather's sake." Access to this information may be limited based on the situation. In the pursuit of employing the best possible science for operational support, the Air Force develops partnerships with other agencies/sources to obtain as much technology as possible and limit the amount of unique development required. The Air Force will continue to pursue improvements in mesoscale weather and climate description through the effective use of higher resolution METSAT and model data.

Specifically regarding the development of a strategy, the following represents the Air Force's interest:

- The Air Force intends to participate in the development of a strategy for providing atmospheric information. In addition to having a stake in any future arrangements for providing atmospheric information, the Air Force brings extensive experience to the table along with some special expertise that could be shared.
- Space weather should be included in the strategy.
- The Air Force supports the view that the flow of environmental data and information should generally be unimpeded (except for national security reasons).
- The greatest advantage (and simplest and best solutions) to providing atmospheric information will be achieved through teams and partnerships working together to better analyze, visualize, and apply the environmental information they can access.
- The Air Force fully supports OFCM as having the lead in coordinating the activities of the various agencies that have a stake in providing and gaining access to atmospheric information.